

**U.S. Department of Education - EDCAPS
G5-Technical Review Form (New)**

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/15/2011 12:37 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Westminster Foundation (U215N110046)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	24
Quality of Project Services		
1. Qual. of Project Services	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	45
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
CPP4 Early Learning		
1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
CPP5 Internet Access		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	
CPP6 Arts and Humanities		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	
CPP7 Affordable Housing		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	
Invitational Priority		
Adult Education		
1. Adult Education	0	
Total	105	101

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Tier II Panel - 1: 84.215N

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Westminster Foundation (U215N110046)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Need for Project.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear and compelling description of each of the key problems faced by the neighborhood and also a summary overview indicating implications for the project design. Some of the key issues in the neighborhood are low student achievement and graduation rates (46% graduation rate), high rate of teen mothers and single female-headed households, gangs and related safety concerns, and lack of medical home for young residents. (p. 107) Many students do not attend schools located in the neighborhood.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

Strengths:

The applicant indicated the area was located in the northeast corner of Buffalo, NY, and described conditions in the neighborhood. (p. 7) Appendix H provided extensive detail on the history and geography of the neighborhood.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Design.

Reader's Score: 24

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which the continuum of solutions is aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.**

Strengths:

The applicant intends to turn around two low performing schools in the neighborhood (K-8 and high school) based on its own model of an effective K-8 community charter school it operates. (p. 8) The model is unique in that the key partner in the turnaround is a bank. (p. 9) Each school will have a student success center as a central hub for services and for providers of services to meet with students and families. (p. 12) The school transformation model includes shared management of schools, creation of a feeder school cluster, creation of the student success centers, adoption of an evidence-based dropout approach, and other strategies. (p. 12-15)

Weaknesses:

It was not clear that the turnaround model for the persistently low performing high school was consistent with one of the required turnaround models for persistently low performing schools.

Reader's Score: 9

- 2. The extent to which the applicant describes an implementation plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps, that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career, and that will significantly increase the proportion of students in the neighborhood that are served by the complete continuum to reach scale over time.**

Strengths:

The applicant illustrated its continuum of solutions in a graphic on p.11. The continuum includes targeted evidence based programs for early learning, school transformation, college/career, and family/community services. (p. 16) All services will be based in the student success centers for coordination. (p. 16) Table C on p. 17 clearly illustrates the major programs that will be integrated into the continuum and which indicators these programs address. The applicant indicated the number of students/families that would be reached by each initiative over time. (p. 14-17)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. The extent to which the applicant identifies existing neighborhood assets and programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds that will be used to implement a continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

The applicant described an extensive sample of service network providers, including health services providers, neighborhood safety organizations and programs, stability programs, and community engagement programs. (p. 26) In addition, resources and assets such as the bank, the university, and other local assets were described in the implementation plan as well as in Appendix F. There is a total of 70 community organizations now in the network. The applicant described how it recruited each of these organizations, including regular strategy meetings with school leadership and a neighborhood inventory of physical, social and commercial assets. (p. 27)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the applicant describes its implementation plan, including clear annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources as described in paragraph (2) of Absolute Priority 1.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear implementation plan for each of the major systems and indicated annual goals for each. For example, with respect to systems improvements, in the first year improvement teams will be up and running and new data shared and reviewed, and by the last year each improvement team will have implemented at least one process improvement and replication plans will be completed. (p. 32)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Services.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, were used to determine each solution within the continuum.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a clear description of its segmentation analysis based on its community needs data gathering during the planning year. The graphic on p. 34 is very clear and understandable, and provides data by key project component, such as Ready for Kindergarten and Ready to Graduate High School, and the segmentation analysis based on each data set.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

2. The extent to which the applicant documents that proposed solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence.

Strengths:

The applicant discussed each of the major initiatives, such as the school transformation initiative, and indicated the evidence and the rating of that evidence. For example, the community schools evidence was stated to be moderate and to show a demonstrated impact. (p. 35) For another example, the middle grades college/career passport initiative was stated to have moderate evidence based on a quasi-experimental longitudinal study.(p. 38)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

3. The extent to which the applicant describes clear, annual goals for improvement on indicators.

Strengths:

The applicant provided a table showing for each of sixteen project indicators the percentage to be achieved during each project year. (p. 40) For example, academic proficiency in grades 5-8 has a baseline of 12% currently; by 2016 the percentage target is 58%. (p. 40)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of the Management Plan.

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.

Strengths:

The applicant learned from its experiences working with the bank that daily presence and participation in the school life was critical to success. (p. 9) The applicant also learned from visits to the Harlem Children's Zone of the importance of bringing academic and student supports as close as possible to the experience of each student. (p. 10) The applicant also discussed its realization of the challenges faced by broad-based coalitions working in urban neighborhoods and realized that much of the work is very time consuming and very difficult to maintain with a disparate group of partners. (p. 25) The applicant learned from this to develop an "open system" model. (p. 25) The management team has over 50 combined years of experience working with the city's leaders as well as the school district. (p. 41) A lesson learned was that the poor conditions persisting in the neighborhood were a result of a lack of coherent strategy to arrest and reverse the decline. (p. 54)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 10

2. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including whether the applicant has a plan to build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources in

Sub Question

order to measure progress while abiding by privacy laws and requirements.

Strengths:

: The applicant has licensed the Efforts to Outcomes system as the hub of the data system. (p. 47) The system includes links to the public schools data warehouse and to the Closing the Gap case management system. (p. 47) The system will be operational when configuration is completed in December 2011. (p. 47) A clear graphic illustrates how the system will work. (p. 49) The system also has robust data analysis tools. (p. 50)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 15

- 3. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.**

Strengths:

The applicant described an extensive listing of partnerships already developed, including the bank, social services, charities, civic organizations, state and county organizations. (p. 53-55) The partners are stated to share a theory of change centered on the need for a culture of learning and nurturing and the awareness that children and families excel when community and schools work together. All services will be done under service agreements, even services provided by partner agencies. (p. 55) The agreements will be monitored for performance as an accountability strategy. (p. 55)

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 10

- 4. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

The applicant indicates the project will integrate \$6 million from the bank, \$8.6 million from foundations and the private sector, and \$6.3 million in commitments from partners and service providers, among other funds. (p. 57) The applicant managed 43 grants since 2004-05 for \$7 million. The applicant will benefit from the bank's fiscal expertise and oversight.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4 Early Learning

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing**

network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.

Strengths:

The applicant provided an extensive description of its plan to address early learning by considering this population as, in essence, a fourth student population. The network includes Head Start, Read to Succeed, Closing the Gap, the public schools, and the applicant's own charter school. (p. 18) There will be outreach and new parent classes, a student success center located at the health center just as one is located at each school, and a campaign for child screening, among other initiatives.

Weaknesses:

None found

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5 Internet Access

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP6 Arts and Humanities

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP7 Affordable Housing

- 1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.**

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reader's Score:

Invitational Priority - Adult Education

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include a plan that is coordinated with adult education providers serving neighborhood residents, such as those funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, as amended. Coordinated services may include adult basic and secondary education and programs that provide training and opportunities for family members and other members of the community to support student learning and establish high expectations for student educational achievement. Examples of services and programs include preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test; English literacy, family literacy, and work-based literacy training; or other training that prepares adults for postsecondary education and careers, or supports adult engagement in the educational success of children and youth in the neighborhood.

Reader's Score:

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Reader #2: *****

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Questions		
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Need for Project		
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Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	24
Quality of Project Services		
1. Qual. of Project Services	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	45
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
CPP4 Early Learning		
1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
CPP5 Internet Access		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	0
CPP6 Arts and Humanities		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	0
CPP7 Affordable Housing		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	0
Invitational Priority		
Adult Education		
1. Adult Education	0	0
Total	105	101

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Tier II Panel - 1: 84.215N

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Westminster Foundation (U215N110046)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Need for Project.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

Strengths:

The needs and problems are cited from current and appropriate sources. The applicant has presented a comprehensive overview of the indicators of need within the BPN. Buffalo is the second largest city in NY state, and has seen a 44% population reduction over the last 4 decades; concurrently jobs in all employment sectors have left the area. Home ownership has reached an all time low and one of eight houses is vacant. The BPN is located in one of the poorest cities in the US with 38% of the BPN children living in poverty, twice the state's rate, which represents over 1,100 children. The rate of free-reduced lunch is 88% higher than the city and almost double the state. The percent of residents who receive TANF, food stamps and Medicaid assistance is higher than almost all other areas in Erie County. The unemployment for youth is double that of New York state. 40% of the residents are ages 0-17, double the city's number. The racial demographics have shifted as well with 72% African-American, 5% Hispanic and Asian and 23 % White. Page e-265. The residents experience crime at the rate of 5 incidents a day, which is 134 incidences of property, drug-related, violent and other crimes per 1,000 residents. This is higher than similar cities in the state and New York City. There are gangs in the area reported by the residents in the most recent community survey. A high number of single parent households, 67% compared to 36% for state; and a high rate of teen pregnancies are noted, more than twice the state rate. The academic needs of the BPN children are reflected in the low attendance and graduation rates and consistently low performance in all grades in core subject proficiencies. The educational attainment of the adults in the area are low across the spectrum of education, from high school to college and graduate school degrees. The target high school is a persistently low achieving school with a 46% graduation rate, and school suspensions at five times the state rate. Page 5. There is significantly high percentage of children with developmental delays, a high number of county health services per residents, and a significantly elevated rate of drug-related (cocaine and alcohol) conditions and STD rates at over five times the state number.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.

Sub Question

Strengths:

The applicant describes the BPN area as an enclave in the northeast corner of the city of Buffalo that is just shy of 1 square mile with a population density of 12,331 per mile. Page e-264 in Appendix G entitled Needs Assessment Report. In Appendix H entitled Assets Report some of the information on the geography of the area is presented. Using several maps, photographs and narrative the BPN is described as a primarily residential area bordered by two major city thoroughfares with the University of Buffalo South Campus to its north. Adjacent to the area, on the east and west sides are commercial districts with shops, businesses and offices, and churches, most of which reflect the currently downturn in the economy. Public transportation via city buses is within walking distance of all homes in the area. There is a single community garden in the area. There are two public schools and one Charter School within the area. There are vacant buildings as well. Rental properties have risen dramatically and as a result the properties have not been adequately maintained. While 1 in eight houses are vacant and are open to vandalism and drug-related activity. There are four maps starting on page e-311 that provide a clear visualization of the neighborhood's geography.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Design.

Reader's Score: 24

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the continuum of solutions is aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

The applicant describes how the identified needs within the community and schools have driven their strategy for school improvement. The BPN strategy is a way to address the needs of their community by building a strong continuum of solutions. Following a Transformational Model, the strategy has four major Initiatives that span the continuum, Early Foundation, School Transformations K-12, College to Career Connections grades 6-12, and a Family/Community Services Network, parents and other residents. The strategy is described as a framework for addressing the needs and problems through the implementation of targeted solutions aligned with the delivery of services and a managed coalition of providers. Page 9. For example, to address the identified needs of low academic student achievement, low attendance rates in Middle School and High School, disparity in access to the internet and a low percentage of students participating in daily physical activity and nutritious eating, low graduation rates and high numbers of absentees, the BPN is partnering with community service providers and educational partners to implement a transformational program, Talent Development, to Middle School and High School students. The components of this model integrate: evidenced-based curriculums, staff development, student support services, school climate change programming and other solutions directly linked to improvement outcomes for the schools and the students. The strategy is comprehensive and ambitious with multiple components

Weaknesses:

There is a lack of detail as to which of the four required models is to be used to address the persistently low performing schools in the PN area; school closure, transformation, turnaround, or re-start.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 9

2. The extent to which the applicant describes an implementation plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps, that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career, and that will significantly increase the proportion of students in the neighborhood that are served by the complete continuum to reach scale over time.

Strengths:

The selection of solutions across the continuum from Pre-natal to College and Career reflect the rigorous strategy. The School Transformation Initiative and the other three Initiatives all share the same shared Service Delivery System with advocates working in the Student Success Centers in the schools. The plan calls for increasing the student participation by adding one grade a year to each Initiative for each of the five years. The grades covered by the different Initiatives vary but there is a connecting element through the school Transformation Initiative and the Family/Community Services Network. The applicant presents extensive description and discussion on each of the Initiatives and of the Model that provides the overall cohesiveness. The applicant demonstrates that the implementation developed by their collaborative effort is intended to provide a continuum of solutions that will expand over time to reach most students in the BPN.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

3. The extent to which the applicant identifies existing neighborhood assets and programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds that will be used to implement a continuum of solutions.

Strengths:

There are neighborhood assets described that are an integral part of the project. Assets include human resources such as Advisory Board members, employees of M&T Bank who volunteer for school programs such as mentoring and community residents who contribute to the projects development and implementation. There are physical assets that include neighborhood businesses, many single family homes that are owner occupied and churches in the BPN. There are healthcare organizations and early learning centers that add to the neighborhood's assets. Partnering professional organizations bring financial and programming services, government and educational partners bring their expertise to the project's implementation. The social assets in the neighborhood are the faith-based congregations, clubs and 70 + community based organizations that have been screened and recruited to be part of the Family/community services Network. Page 28 and Appendix F.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

4. The extent to which the applicant describes its implementation plan, including clear annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources as described in paragraph (2) of Absolute Priority 1.

Strengths:

The applicant presents six management systems that will be used in the project to foster performance and continuous improvement. The management systems will all be linked to the BPN central staff and be used to provide progress data, managing data systems and maintain continuity of service delivery. There are annual goals for each of the five years for three general areas: creating infrastructure, improving

Sub Question

systems, and leveraging resources. The annual goals all are intended to expand or create solutions' programming as the project scales up. Page 32. The applicant describes systems changes and improvements that are holistic and cross boundaries enhance the programming. The cite the summer program that was partnered with the M&T Bank where new and innovative teaching practices were piloted and children had a place to come during summer months. Page 30.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services**1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Services.**

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question**1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, were used to determine each solution within the continuum.****Strengths:**

There are 14 segmentation factors that were analyzed, 12 PN mandated indicators and 2 additional Family/community support indicators. From a summary of the segmentation results, the needs were evident across the continuum, from low Kindergarten readiness to absenteeism and low performance on core achievement tests in the Middle School and the lack of college readiness, health risks and low academic performance among High School students. In Appendix G entitled Needs Assessment Study, the sources from which information and data was collected are provided, the segmentation analysis indicators on demographic data, academic indicators, family/student/community data, schools data on attendance , graduation rates, health and wellness information, are listed. There is a detailed description of the data for each indicator. Pages 32-34.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

2. The extent to which the applicant documents that proposed solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence.**Strengths:**

In Appendix F, pages 2-6 the applicant provides a compilation of the evidence that was reviewed in the selection process of the solutions to be implemented. In Appendix F there are descriptions of each to the solutions and included for each solution is a summary of the evidence supporting that choice.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 5

3. The extent to which the applicant describes clear, annual goals for improvement on indicators.

Strengths:

The applicant has designed their project to address all of the PN mandated indicators and additional indicators specific to the needs of their school-community. Page 17. They have provided a Table F, page 40, which clearly presents the five years of annual goals aligned with the mandated project indicators and the indicators that they have developed. Each set of annual goals is aligned with current baseline data. Some of the mandated indicators are broken down by grade levels to provide more specific assessments. The goals are measureable and clear and are all reprint improvement. The applicant has thought about what percent of change is necessary to make a change in the needs indicators, and what the tipping point for making positive differences in the PN community is.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of the Management Plan.

Reader's Score: 45

Sub Question

1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.

Strengths:

The applicant has been working with the schools and LEA in a yearlong BPN school reform planning. One of the lead partners has an 18 year history of working in and with the schools and LEA. The applicant has exhibited the experience in building capacity within the school community. The reference that many of the practices and systems developed for working with the constituencies have been incorporated into the six key management systems. The applicant visited the Harlem Children's Zone to see how they manage their successful program. Page 10. The project's Key Personnel have the experience in working with the neighborhood and its residents as well as the skills to manage this project. Page 42. The lessons learned include the importance of including community leadership, and a network of partners that can be managed under leadership that can harness and catalyze all parties. Page 44. The planning team spent a year meeting with and listening to folks from all over the BPN area to hear their ideas, problems and concerns. This process generated plan components to reach individuals with disabilities, language barriers or other needs. Page 45. There are plans to build capacity of the management team and Project Director, to create a Neighborhood Safety Network, expand Adult Education to ages 17+, facilitate a Medical Homes Recruitment program, and assist with other ideas generated from within the community

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Sub Question

2. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including whether the applicant has a plan to build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources in order to measure progress while abiding by privacy laws and requirements.**

Strengths:

The applicant and the partners have a demonstrated level of experience and skills that speaks to their ability to manage a database and use the information generated to enhance and develop programs that will meet the needs of their constituencies. The longitudinal database that is already being used in the charter school will be expanded for this project. It serves multiple functions: case management records, data sharing, program evaluation and continuous improvement. The software selected for this part of the project. The applicant has learned from the banking partner the value of data driven solutions including in specific on-going assessment. The applicant will abide by the confidentiality and privacy laws. The applicant is in the process of expanding to a longitudinal database from the Buffalo Public Schools that will combine student-level data from academic and social/personal sources, family data, PN and other indicator data and the cost of services data. Managed by the applicant, who will facilitate the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. Data will be used to help teachers, PN Advocates, and direct service providers in decision-making and making continuous improvements and planning programming. Page 50.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 15

3. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.**

Strengths:

There is a Neighborhood Advisory Board whose members include over 50% BPN residents. Page 56. The applicant described the value of hiring management that brings experience and skills to the project. Key personnel in the project are listed and current resumes are included. The partners who have signed the MOU all agreed to the shared theories of action and change. The MOU document is a comprehensive, well written and well designed document. The partners who signed the MOUs agree to support the project with resources, services and management participation, and have all included their own organization's theory of action and change and their vision.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

4. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

The applicant has a long history of working in the community and raising funds for projects and programs., There is a list of total anticipated project expenditure over the five years and the matching dollars that have been leveraged for this project. The opportunity to have a planning grant has been the critical link to creating a full continuum of linked and seamlessly implemented solutions. They discuss their ability to build capacity through the integration of multiple funding streams and to negotiate new

Sub Question

funding configurations. Page 58-59. The applicant describes the lessons that they have learned from the sponsoring bank that speaks to the leveraging of resources, financial and otherwise.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions**Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4 Early Learning**

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.

Strengths:

The applicant's proposal for the Early Learning competitive presents nine relevant program components considering the pre-school children the fourth school in the BPN. The applicant is partnering with a local Early Childhood Center that brings experiences and expertise to this component. The propose to offer parenting outreach and classes, address having a medical home with families, provide and advocate for screening programs, include professional staff development, continue the affiliation with the NYS QualityStars early learning program, and collect data to be shared and used for continuous Improvement. They present a well designed and ambitious program that will work to network early childhood services.

Weaknesses:

There are no weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5 Internet Access

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.

Strengths:

The applicant has not responded to this Priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not responded to this Priority.

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP6 Arts and Humanities

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

The applicant has not responded to this Priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not responded to this Priority.

Reader's Score: **0**

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP7 Affordable Housing

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

Strengths:

The applicant has not responded to this Priority.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not responded to this Priority.

Reader's Score: **0**

Invitational Priority - Adult Education

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include a plan that is coordinated with adult education providers serving neighborhood residents, such as those funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, as amended. Coordinated services may include adult basic and secondary education and programs that provide training and opportunities for family members and other members of the community to support student learning and establish high expectations for student educational achievement. Examples of services and programs include preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test; English literacy, family literacy, and work-based literacy training; or other training that prepares adults for postsecondary education and careers, or supports adult engagement in the educational success of children and youth in the neighborhood.

No

Reader's Score: **0**

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 11/15/2011 06:32 PM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 11/15/2011 02:21 PM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Westminster Foundation (U215N110046)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Selection Criteria		
Need for Project		
1. Need for Project	15	15
Quality of Project Design		
1. Quality of Project Design	25	24
Quality of Project Services		
1. Qual. of Project Services	15	15
Quality of the Management Plan		
1. Qual. of Management Plan	45	44
Priority Questions		
Competitive Preference Priority		
CPP4 Early Learning		
1. CPP4 Early Learning	2	2
CPP5 Internet Access		
1. CPP5 Internet Access	1	0
CPP6 Arts and Humanities		
1. CPP6 Arts and Humanities	1	0
CPP7 Affordable Housing		
1. CPP7 Affordable Housing	1	0
Invitational Priority		
Adult Education		
1. Adult Education	0	0
Total	105	100

Technical Review Form

Panel #1 - Tier II Panel - 1: 84.215N

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Westminster Foundation (U215N110046)

Questions

Selection Criteria - Need for Project

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Need for Project.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The magnitude or severity of the problems to be addressed by the proposed project as described by indicators of need and other relevant indicators identified in part by the needs assessment and segmentation analysis.

Strengths:

During the planning grant phase, the applicant engaged neighborhood leaders and residents in a extensive six-phase needs assessment and community engagement process. As a result, five strong categories of need for the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood have been identified. Within each category, the applicant provides statistical data that justifies and substantiates need within; academic, community health, crime and violence, family stress, and poverty / unemployment.

Examples of need include: 46% graduation rate for BPN in comparison to the NYS average of 74%. Buffalo violent crime is 1.47% in comparison to .99% in Rochester, .98% Syracuse and .55% NYS.

An extensive Needs Assessment Study conducted by the Regional Institute at the University at Buffalo revealed key problems affecting children's well-being. These were used to design parameters in developing the BPN continuum. (pg 6)

14 project indicators and six transition phases along the Continuum that was designed produced five key factors. These include:

1.Student dispersion - due to school choice policies, fewer than one in four Neighborhood children attend a BPN school, and another 1,200 children disperse to 55 different schools. BPN schools are impacted by 1,600 children who come from across the city each day.

2.Single Parent - 86% of new families, those with children 5 years or younger are headed by a single parent family, typically a mother. A quarter of the newborns have a teenage mother, a rate that is 2.5 times greater than the national average.

3.Chronic absenteeism - among BPN students, one in ten is missing a moth of school at the elementary level, this rate doubles by 8th grade and spikes to over 50% in high school.

4.Student readiness - academic proficiency is low, only 18% of 5th graders score proficient or above on all standardized tests and only 46% of ninth graders at Bennett High school graduate.

5.Gang and safety issues within the Neighborhood were registered by residents during the planning and assessment phase.

Comparison data between BPN and the City of Buffalo and/or NYS is provided in Appendix G, within the

Sub Question

Final Draft of the Needs Assessment Study, e257 - 304.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

2. The extent to which the geographically defined area has been described.**Strengths:**

The applicant states, page 7 that Buffalo's Phase 1 Promise Neighborhood is in the northeastern corner of Buffalo, location and boundaries of the area to be served are further defined within Appendix H. Schools to be impacted or involved include a high-performing, high poverty K-8 school and two low-performing schools - one Pre K - 8 and the other a persistently lowest-achieving high school.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Design**1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Design.**

Reader's Score: 24

Sub Question**1. The extent to which the continuum of solutions is aligned with an ambitious, rigorous, and comprehensive strategy for improvement of schools in the neighborhood.****Strengths:**

The applicant states that after a year of intensive work they have vetted programs and services from over 70 organizations and have identified a continuum of solutions which include: a framework for transforming programs into integrated well coordinated initiatives built on a sound theory of change, a service delivery system that operates closely with students and classrooms and a set of management systems that organize a broad-based coalition into a high-performance operation. (page 9)

The primary objective of the BPN proposal is to increase readiness of students in effectively transitioning through critical stages of development to achievement and life time success. (pg 10) BPN Continuum Initiatives include reflecting neighborhood needs and assets, major partner expertise, and extensive study of national models to cover the complete continuum. Through the continuum initiatives, school transformation is placed front and center as the priority. (pg 10)

The applicant identifies that the delivery system includes new Student Success Centers, which will support the delivery of services and planning to intersect between community and school. Through the help of Student/Family Advocates identified youth and family needs will be matched with services. The S/F Advocate will also collaborate with the student teachers and other school staff to ensure that needs is met, and will work in cross-Initiative teams to access and analyze data to inform solutions.

To ensure that the school transformation initiative is highly intentional, integrated and coherent, the applicant states that they will draw on ten key elements. (pg 13-15)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not sufficiently address the turnaround model that will be used to impact Bennett High School a persistently lowest achieving school.

Reader's Score: 9

2. The extent to which the applicant describes an implementation plan to create a complete continuum of solutions, including early learning through grade 12, college- and career-readiness, and family and community supports, without time and resource gaps, that will prepare all children in the neighborhood to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career, and that will significantly increase the proportion of students in the neighborhood that are served by the complete continuum to reach scale over time.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to launch the School Transformation Initiative in all three BPN schools in year one and to be fully functioning with their service delivery model, allowing them to add new grade cohort each year, thus increasing the proportion of students being served. (pg 16)

Through the Early Foundations program the applicant seeks to initially enroll all newborns into their programs, the project adding 160 newborns annually. College/Career Connections will install Advisory Services for all students, with a first year focus on pre-college and pre-career experiences for grades 6-9, new cohorts each year will be added until all 1,500 students in grades 6-12 are served in year five.

Children under the age of five (800) will be recognized as a fourth student population and will require reliable processes for screening, diagnosis, learning, literacy, and family/community supports. Nine key components for Early Learning have been identified to address readiness, training, family support and expansion of service to meet the growing need.

A thorough Transformation Plan, outlining the ten key elements, their target indicators, description, program costs and activity, implementation plan, segmentation analysis and evidence further supports the proposed continuum of services outlined within this proposal. (pg e-150 - e-190)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. The extent to which the applicant identifies existing neighborhood assets and programs supported by Federal, State, local, and private funds that will be used to implement a continuum of solutions.

Strengths:

Through the needs assessment and community engagement process, the applicant identified 70 + service organizations, the physical and social assets in the Neighborhood. A complete report of Neighborhood assets has been provided within Appendix H. (pg 305 - 315)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

4. The extent to which the applicant describes its implementation plan, including clear annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources as described in paragraph (2) of Absolute Priority 1.

Strengths:

The applicant has identified six key management systems to foster performance and continuous improvement. These include; shared management of schools, ten improvement teams, shared data systems, Human Capital development system, operations & accountability, and grants & funding innovation. All six levels are presented with considerable detail describing their primary function in support of the implementation plan. (pg 29-30)

Annual goals for improving systems and leveraging resources have been outline within Table D, page 32 of the application.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of Project Services

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of Project Services.

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the applicant describes how the needs assessment and segmentation analysis, including identifying and describing indicators, were used to determine each solution within the continuum.

Strengths:

A summary of BPN Segmentation has been provided. Findings and segmentation decisions provide information on solutions that have been identified for all six of the applicants proposed areas of focus. A extensive overview of the process that was used to determine solutions can be found within Appendix G.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

2. The extent to which the applicant documents that proposed solutions are based on the best available evidence including, where available, strong or moderate evidence.

Strengths:

The applicant provides a strong case for the solutions proposed. Stating that during their planning year, BPN went to great lengths to develop solutions based on the best available evidence. The design of the four key Continuum Initiatives rests on moderate or strong evidence from key programs. When possible, these research and findings around the solutions within the initiatives have been noted.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. The extent to which the applicant describes clear, annual goals for improvement on indicators.

Strengths:

The applicant uses multiple factors to project the arc of improvement on an indicator by indicator basis. These factors include: increasing proportion of students served due to cohorts entering the continuum, any phasing of implementation, increasing effectiveness in programs and service delivery, projected critical mass effects, as well as a difference in the pace of improvements between indicators they might have more control over. Annual goals on 14 Project Indicators have been identified and provided, pg 40, table F.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

Selection Criteria - Quality of the Management Plan

1. Please respond to the sub-questions regarding the Quality of the Management Plan.

Reader's Score: 44

Sub Question

1. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in working with the neighborhood and its residents; the schools described in paragraph (2)(b) of Absolute Priority 1; the LEA in which those schools are located; Federal, State, and local government leaders; and other service providers.

Strengths:

Table G - Fast facts on Westminster Foundation's Organizational Capacity indicates that the management team has experience in working with all sectors required for this application. (pg 41)

The applicant provides substantial background on the relationship with M & T Bank, their involvement within the Westminster Community Charter School and dedication to supporting school reform. (pg 42-44)

For lessons learned, the applicant shares that through an extensive listening tour, listening to ideas and concerns from every corner of the community. This has resulted in a broad BPN Steering Committee of community leaders who are meeting and planning regularly on a host of community initiatives. (pg 45) Based on priorities set by the community, five community action initiatives have been identified: community engagement, neighborhood safety, adult education and literacy, health and wellness and community development. (pg 46)

The applicant states that with these initiatives and others they are generating a high level of support from many quarters. Business leaders, elected officials, community service providers, as well as local government staff.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

- 2. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability, including whether the applicant has a plan to build, adapt, or expand a longitudinal data system that integrates student-level data from multiple sources in order to measure progress while abiding by privacy laws and requirements.**

Strengths:

The applicant shares lessons learned during two study trips to the Harlem Children's Zone. Delivery models were especially important in helping the planning team determine activities that would enhance the ability to bring academic and student/family supports as close as possible to the daily experience of each student. (pg 10)

The applicant proposes utilizing Efforts to outcomes (ETO) from Social Solutions, making it the hub of a comprehensive shared data system that will pull together the four major Continuum Initiatives. Linkage will include being able to align with the Buffalo Public School data warehouse and an existing Closing the Gap case management system. The goal is to combine student and family data, indicator data, and cost of services data into a shared P-20 longitudinal case management, accountability and analytic tool support all stakeholders, including students and parents.

System developing and monitoring will be support by the IT department of M&T Band and IQR Consulting Inc. The system will be managed by the Westminster Foundation's Chief Operating Officer and Data Director. (pg 48)

The applicant will work with other Promise Neighborhood groups and the National Evaluator to share solutions and results, and to develop common standards where appropriate. (pg 48)

Due to the comprehensive system being designed to collect longitudinal data, the applicant will be able to provide longitudinal data on every child in both the academic and social/emotional/economic realm. (pg 50)

The applicant states within their BPN Data Parameter (pg 51) that participant confidentiality and privacy rights will be protected.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 15

- 3. Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in creating formal and informal partnerships, including the alignment of the visions, theories of action, and theories of change described in its memorandum of understanding, and creating a system for holding partners accountable for performance in accordance with the memorandum of understanding.**

Strengths:

The states that together the partners share a theory of change centered on the need for a culture of learning and nurturing which emphasizes the continuous development of the whole child. (pg 54). Individual partner theory of change and action have been outlined within individual MOU and provided on pages e-359 - 416.

Experience in building capacity for both formal and informal partnerships has been well documented through this application. Experience and ability align with the 70+ community service providers,

Sub Question

schools, community residents who have been involved since the planning year.

The MOU found on pages e-343 - e-358 is well written and addresses key components which set a standard and accountability practices into place. The Purpose and Mission of BPN, Agreement between the Westminster Foundation and BPS is clearly outlined, Substantive Provisions addressing School Turnaround Partner, curriculum, funding, budget and remittance of funding, allocation and competitive grants, facilities - maintenance and repair, new construction, governance, contractors, social service providers, indemnification and additional insured are among the thirty topics understanding between the two primary management organizations.

Weaknesses:

The applicant has not addressed lesson learned for this segment of the proposal.

Reader's Score: 9

4. **Experience, lessons learned, and proposal to build capacity of applicant's management team and project director in integrating funding streams from multiple public and private sources, including its proposal to leverage and integrate high-quality programs in the neighborhood into the continuum of solutions.**

Strengths:

Experience and lesson learned - The applicant identifies multiple funding streams that have been successfully applied for and managed by the Westminster Charter School and Westminster Foundation. Each audit found the funds were properly managed. (pg 58)

The applicant states that they will build capacity around meeting the need to identify and integrate funding streams beyond the initial five-year financial plan within this application.

The Westminster Foundation will partner with M & T Bank on major grants and work with the banks Community Reinvestment office to identify a variety of potential opportunities that may be consistent with the Promise Neighborhood program. (pg 58)

The numerous partners and their multi-source finding will also be utilized.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

Priority Questions

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP4 Early Learning

1. **To meet this priority, an applicant must propose in its plan to expand, enhance, or modify, an existing network of early learning programs and services to ensure they are high-quality and comprehensive for children from birth through the third grade.**

Strengths:

The applicant proposes a comprehensive local early learning network that will focus on readiness for kindergarten and proficiency by 3rd grade. They propose to nine key elements for this initiative. They include: Outreach and new parent classes, a high quality medical home for every young family, a student success center and BPN Advocates located at the center, establishing a collective campaign for child screenings, elevating professional practices through a literacy advocate, a new Early Childhood Center for the Neighborhood, An early adopter of NYS's Quality Stars program, tracking the teen pregnancy, and continuous improvement through an Early Learning Improvement Team.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 2

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP5 Internet Access

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must ensure that almost all students in the geographic area proposed to be served have broadband Internet access at home and at school, the knowledge and skills to use broadband internet access effectively, and a connected computing device to support schoolwork.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP6 Arts and Humanities

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include in its plan opportunities for children and youth to experience and participate actively in the arts and humanities in their community so as to broaden, enrich, and enliven the educational, cultural, and civic experiences available in the neighborhood.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Competitive Preference Priority - CPP7 Affordable Housing

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must propose to serve geographic areas that were the subject of an affordable housing transformation pursuant to a Choice Neighborhoods or HOPE VI grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during FY2009 or later years.

Strengths:

NA

Weaknesses:

NA

Reader's Score: 0

Invitational Priority - Adult Education

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must include a plan that is coordinated with adult education providers serving neighborhood residents, such as those funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, as amended. Coordinated services may include adult basic and secondary education and programs that provide training and opportunities for family members and other members of the community to support student learning and establish high expectations for student educational achievement. Examples of services and programs include preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test; English literacy, family literacy, and work-based literacy training; or other training that prepares adults for postsecondary education and careers, or supports adult engagement in the educational success of children and youth in the neighborhood.

No

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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